Theophanes: *Chronicle* - on the Greens & Blues

This is the account of a conversation between an officer of the Green faction and the herald of Justinian, as recorded by the later chronicaler, Theophanes.

Greens: Long live Emperor Justinian! May he be ever victorious! But, O best of Princes, we are suffering all kinds of injustice. God knows we cannot stand it any longer. Yet we are afraid to name our persecutor, from fear that he may become more angry and that we shall incur still greater dangers.

Herald: I do not know of whom you are speaking.

Greens: Our oppressor, O thrice August! lives in the shoemakers' quarter.

Herald: No one's doing you any injury.

Greens: A single man persecutes us. O Mother of God, protect us!

Herald: I do not know this man.

Greens: Oh, yes, you do! You know very well, thrice August, who is our executioner at present.-

Herald: If any one is persecuting you, I do not know who it is

Greens: Well, Master of the World, it is Calopodios.

Herald: Calopodios has nothing to do with you.

Greens: Whoever it is will suffer the fate of Judas, and God will very soon punish him for his injustice.

Herald: Yu didn't come here to see the show, but only to insult the officials.

Greens: Yes, if any one annoys us he will suffer the fate of Judas.

Herald: Shut up, you Jews, Manicheans, Samaritans!

Greens: You call us Jews and Samaritans; may the Mother of God protect us all equally!

Herald: I want you to get baptized.

Greens: All right, we'll get baptized.

Herald: I tell you, if you don't shut up, I'll have your heads cut off

Greens: Each one seeks to have power, in order to be safe. If our remarks hurt you we hope that you will not be at all irritated. He who is divine ought to bear ought to bear everything patiently. But, while we are talk, we shall call a spade a spade. We no longer know, thrice August, where the palace is or the government; the only way we know the city now is when we pass through it on an ass's back. And that is unjust, thrice August.

Herald: Every freeman can appear publicly wherever he likes, without danger.

Greens: We know very well we are free, but we are not allowed to use our liberty. And if any freeman is suspected of being a Green, he is always punished by public authority

Herald: Jail-birds, don't you fear for your souls?

Greens: Let the color which we wear be suppressed, and the courts will be out of a job. You allow us to be assassinated, and, in addition, you order us to be punished. You are the source of life, and you kill whomsoever you choose. Truly, human nature cannot endure these two opposites. Ah! would to heaven that your father Sabbatios had never been born. He would not have begotten an assassin. just now a sixth murder took place in the Zeugma; yesterday the man was alive, and in the evening, Master of all things, he was dead.

Blues: All the murderers in the Stadium belong . to your party.

Greens: You do the killing, and you escape punishment. Blues: You do the killing, and you keep on talking; all the assassins in the Stadium belong to your faction. y complain, and yet no one is killing them.

Greens: O Emperor Justinian! They complain, and yet no one is killing them. Come, let's discuss it; who killed the dealer in wood in the Zeugma?

Herald: You did.

Greens: And the son of Epagathos, who killed him, O Emperor?

Herald: You did that, too, and you accuse the Blues of it.

Greens: That will do. May the Lord have mercy on us. Truth is getting the worst of it. If it is true that God governs the world, where do so many calamities come from.

Herald: God is a stranger to evil.

Greens: God is a stranger to evil! Then why are we persecuted. Let a philosopher or a hermit it come to solve the dilemma.

Herald: Blasphemers, enemies of God will you not keep still?

Greens: If your Majesty orders us we shall keep still, thrice August, but it will be against Our will. We know all about it, but we are silent. Adieu. Justice, thou dost not

exist any longer. We are going away; we'll become Jews. God knows, it is better to be a pagan than a Blue.

Blues: Oh, horrors! We don't want to see them any longer,; such hatred frightens us.

Greens: We hope the bones of the spectators will be thrown into the sewer some day.

Translated by D. Munro and G. Sellerv, from the *Chronicle of Theophanes* in *Medieval Civilization*, (New York: Century Co. 1910), 104-107

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